

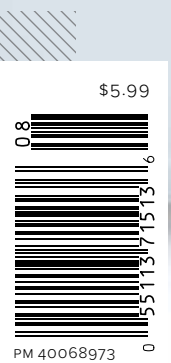
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WESTERN LIVING // JULY/AUG 2018

Falken Reynolds Perfects
the Cozy Modern Vibe

Designer Martine Ast's
Gorgeous '70s Reno in Calgary

PLUS The Sublime Luxury
of the Old-School Safari



Bright Now

PLUS *Foodies of the Year!* The 10 Most Influential Tastemakers in the West

FORMULA: NONE

A not-so-builder-basic formula
reimagines the spec home.

by **AMANDA ROSS** // *photographs by* **EMA PETER**





Timeless Design The Falken Reynolds team aimed to create an airy, contemporary space that wouldn't overwhelm potential buyers while at the same time ensuring timelessness that any homeowner could grow with.

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IKE OUTSIZED PERSONALITIES, there will always be spaces that impose their design will on you, usually with over-the-top pomp and circumstance. Maybe it's furniture on steroids or sweeping drapes layered over wallpaper; it might be dizzyingly kaleidoscopic patterns jumbled together like a Middle Eastern bazaar gone wild. Whichever they are, their take-no-prisoners flashiness demands your relentless attention.

Conversely, quiet restraint can be equally dramatic, without giving the viewer whiplash. It might take a little longer to get to know the space intimately, but you can plumb its depths over time. For this stunning Vancouver house, its powerfully quiet details register only after careful, studied contemplation; elegant, simple moderation informs the striking space but asks for your attention only with a whisper. And the home wasn't designed for just anyone—it was designed for everyone.

Chad Falkenberg and Kelly Reynolds of Falken Reynolds Interiors never set out to design for a spec house. Speculating on Vancouver's real estate market isn't for the faint of heart, with 33-foot lots on the city's east side clocking in at well over a million dollars before the hammer even lands. But when Kenton and Jayme Lepp of Moosehead Contracting—who've worked with local architectural stars like BattersbyHowat and D'Arcy Jones—invited the duo to collaborate on a project from the ground up, they jumped on board. Oftentimes, cheap material from economy-driven builder-basic houses eventually ends up in the landfill because of its shorter life cycle. A blank slate designed with quality in mind would allow the designers to imprint their signature clean, modern ethos but also challenge them to curate an aesthetic for a broad spectrum of buyers without breaking the bank.

The key to the interior would hinge on inspiring details



Light and Bright
“A ceiling can feel monotonous and not overly interesting,” says Chad Falkenberg of Falken Reynolds. In between the ceiling’s joists, the team ran a recessed cavity as an interesting way to get light into the kitchen with more of an architectural detail (left). Having the lights recessed also removes the glare that often accompanies recessed lighting.



dovetailed into Moosehead’s clean-lined shell. Much of the pair’s inspiration comes from renovations where they “see a lot of really bad things largely because things aren’t considered.” Their job is to fix it, whether it’s a view that’s not properly capitalized on or a kitchen that’s not functional. The firm has garnered a reputation for beautiful and graceful craftsmanship that draws heavily on contemporary lines, but with this project, they would need to design and value-engineer from scratch in order to maximize quality while still being conscious of price. No small feat.

“Good design and bad design cost the same, so why not design it really well?” Falkenberg says of the process. Not knowing who the end client would be could have stumped someone less experienced, but already having a winning formula meant they could hit the ground running. “We use the term ‘warm minimalism’ or ‘a quiet palette,’” Falkenberg further explains. “It’s doing things in a simple way so

owners can then layer their life into the house.”

From the exterior, the home itself is a classic Craftsman, but the almost-3,000-square-foot interior is all Scandinavian-meets-West-Coast-modernism. Timeless yet on trend, spare but inviting—the interior is clad in light elm wood, natural stone and the designers’ unfussy approach. Clever and thoughtful high-design details reveal themselves to lingering gazes and further deliberation. From floor-to-ceiling closet doors with pivot hinges to floating stairs that add high-end custom detail, the overall result is the antithesis of cookie-cutter.

Slow-release elegance and beauty in the home abounds: a slatted oak screen at the stairs doubles as a natural room divider yet keeps the space airy and open; a low-lying built-in bench by the fire topped in raven Caesarstone includes storage but also serves as occasional extra seating; overhead lights in the kitchen are recessed and painted black to add dimension and visual interest. At first blush, the overhead rows



Restrained Palette

The kitchen cabinetry is a mix of white and black lacquer paired with elm for a modern yet warm combination of materials. In the adjoining staircase, a slatted floor-to-ceiling divider provides visual separation so that when visitors enter, they don't feel like they're right smack in the dining room. "It's a perforated connection to the entrance," says Falkenberg.

“Most people don’t want their home to look like a staged real estate listing; they want it to look like it’s ready for a cover shot for an interiors magazine.”



look like beams until you realize they’re simply a dark, inverse beam-like detail.

As well, the team “tried to be conscious of materials that would last—quality materials like Caesarstone and good plumbing fixtures like Hansgrohe, but mixed in an interesting way,” says Falkenberg. “When you see our spaces for the first time, you see modern and clean...almost efficient at first.” He adds: “But what we try to do is then create interesting touchpoints—it’s the less-obvious things like the millwork and the quality of a fixture that people really notice after they’ve lived in a space for a while.”

Coincidentally, the family who ended up buying the house works in the design field. Their low-lying furniture complemented the low-profile millwork; their lack of clutter is already a perfect fit. One could be forgiven for thinking their collection of books was actually the designers’ attempts to style the space. **///**



Smart Planning

The master bedroom is designed with the team’s classic restrained palette, creating a white and calming space for its future residents. In the study, they used books as a design element for perfect form and function (left). “Big expansive walls lend themselves to books,” says Falkenberg.